

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

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R 022201Z AUG 74

FM USMISSION USUN NY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4970

INFO AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

C O N F I D E N T I A L USUN 2695

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR CB

SUBJ: KHMER AT 29TH GA: MADAME PENG'S "RESIGNATION"

1. KHMER MISSION DEPUTY MADAME PENG TELEPHONED MISOFF AUGUST 2 TO SAY THAT SHE WILL LEAVE KHMER MISSION PERMANENTLY AS OF AUGUST 15. SHE SAID SHE HAD MADE IRREVOCABLE DECISION TO LEAVE KHMER MISSION, FIRST CHARACTERIZING THIS AS "RESIGNATION" BUT THEN EXPLAINING THAT IT WILL BE TECHNICALLY A YEAR'S LEAVE OF ABSENCE. SHE SAID THAT SHE HAD FORMALLY SUBMITTED A LETTER AND DISCUSSED THIS WITH FOREIGN MINISTER KEUKY LIM AND THAT, NO MATTER WHAT THE REACTION IS IN HER OWN GOVT, SHE WILL REFUSE TO SERVE IN THE MISSION BEYOND AUGUST 15.

2. SHE SAID THAT SHE WILL CARRY OUT AN EARLIER COMMITMENT OF KEUKY LIM TO GO TO CARACAS FOR THE FINAL WEEKS OF THE LOS CONFERENCE. SHE WILL THEN RETURN TO NEW YORK WITHOUT ANY FIRM PLANS.

3. SHE SAID THAT SHE GAVE HER REASON AS BEING DUE TO HER "HEALTH," BUT ADDED IN TELEPHONE CONVERSATION THAT "I JUST CAN'T STAND ANY MORE OF THE WORK HERE WHICH I HAVE BEEN DOING SO LONG." IN FACT, MADAME PENG HAS, DURING LAST TWO GA'S, WORKED UNDER TREMENDOUS PRESSURE, TO WHICH SHE HAS MANIFESTLY BEEN SENSITIVE. STARTING EARLY THIS YEAR, SHE HAS SUFFERED FROM UNDIAGNOSED AILMENT, WHICH INITIALLY SEEMD TO BE AN ALLERGY, WHICH CREATED RASH AND CAUSED HER FACE TO

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SWELL. MADAME PENG ALSO, HOWEVER, HAS OFTEN INFORMALLY EXPRESSED

HER ANGUISH OVER BOTH PERFORMANCE OF HER OWN GOVT AND SUFFERING OF KHMER PEOPLE. IN THIS CONNECTION, SHE HAS BEEN EXPLORING POSSIBILITY OF WORKING IN UN SECRETARIAT, WITH A SPECIAL INTEREST IN ITS HUMANITARIAN ACTIVITIES, BUT SHE HAS NOT SO FAR BEEN SUCCESSFUL.

4. COMMENT: AS DEPT AND EMBASSY PHNOM PENH AWARE, WE HAVE FOUND MADAME PENG TO BE A VERY ENERGETIC AND RELATIVELY ABLE LOBBYIST FOR KHMER CAUSE HERE. SHE HAS EXCELLENT CONTACTS EVEN AMONG PRO-GRUNK DELEGATES. PRESENCE OF AN ABLE AMBASSADOR CAN REDUCE DAMAGE TO KHMER CAUSED BY MADAME PENG'S DEPARTURE, BUT HER LOSS NEVERTHELESS WILL INEVITABLY HANDICAP GKR EFFORT HERE.
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